A Brief History of

Freemasonry in the Terre Haute area predates the establishment of the community itself. Masons were present at the construction of Fort Harrison in 1811 and helped establish the Terre Haute Company that platted the village in 1816.

Established in 1819, Terre Haute Lodge No. 19 holds the distinction of being the oldest formal organization in the area, younger only than the county government.

On March 10, 1819, thirteen Master Masons residing in the village of Terre Haute signed a Petition for Dispensation from the recently formed Grand Lodge of Indiana. Their names were: Peter B. Allen, John T. Chunn, Lucius H. Scott, Toussaint DuBois, James Hall, Andrew Brooks, Zebina C. Hovey, Demas Deming, Curtis Gilbert, Samuel McQuilkin, Robert Brasher, Thomas H. Clark and Elihu Hovey. Dispensation was issued by then Grand Master Alexander Meek, and on July 12, 1819, the Lodge was called to labor by Elihu Stout of Vincennes Lodge No. 1, acting as Deputy Grand Master. The following officers were then installed:

Peter B. Allen, W.M.
Elihu Hovey, S.W.
Lucius H. Scott, J.W.
John Britton, Treas.
Curtis Gilbert, Sec.
Samuel McQuilkin, S.D.
Zebina C. Hovey, J.D.
Andrew Brooks, Steward.
Robert Brasher, Tyler.

Lt. Col. Peter B. Allen, first Worshipful Master of Terre Haute Lodge No. 19.

These men, the first installed officers of a Masonic Lodge in the area, served variously until the receipt of the charter, which was issued September 13, 1821, and named Demas Deming, W.M., Curtis Gilbert, S.W., and Robert Sturges, J.W. This venerable document is still in use and remains an honored link to our past. According to recent research, it is the oldest surviving document issued by the Grand Lodge of Indiana (previous charters having been recalled to be re-issued on vellum).

In those early years Terre Haute Lodge No. 19 met in Curtis Gilbert's home, Henry Redford's Eagle and Lion tavern, and other places before locating to Abner Fuller's woolen mill, east of Sixth Street on Cherry. The Lodge continued to meet there until 1834. It was at this time that anti-Masonic hysteria was sweeping

Original Charter dated September 13, 1821.

the country. Over the next decade, Terre Haute Lodge No. 19 held only informal meetings, and these at irregular intervals. There are accounts of meetings being held in Elijah Tillotson's jewelry store on First Street between Poplar and Ohio as well as several private homes during this period, though no official record exits.

The Lodge, like so many others, suffered during this dark period. Even the Grand Lodge of Indiana failed to establish a quorum in 1833 and discussions were held about its dissolution. Yet Masonry survived. Unsure of the Lodge's current position at this delicate time, members of Terre Haute Lodge No. 19 petitioned the Grand Lodge for a new dispensation in 1845. After some initial confusion, Grand Lodge healed the Lodge and restored the charter at its Annual Communication in 1846.

The Lodge immediately emerged to a season of prosperity. Membership numbers swelled, quickly propelling No. 19 to the largest lodge in the state. The desire for further Light caused several of the members to help create Terre Haute Chapter No. 11, Royal Arch Masons in 1849. That same year, a number of members of "Old 19" petitioned the Grand Lodge to form a new lodge and increase opportunities for Masonic fellowship. Thus, Social Lodge No. 86 was born and received its charter in 1850.

The 1860s brought the turmoil of Civil War, and No. 19 sent many from its roll to fight in the conflict. It gave its blessing and support to the establishment of not less than two military lodges in regiments mustering from Terre Haute. In one of these, a young Colonel named Charles Cruft would be initiated. He rose to the rank of Maj. General and affiliated with Terre Haute Lodge No. 19 at the War's end.

Bvt. Maj. General Charles Cruft, ca. 1865.

In the decades that followed, Lodge 19 benefited greatly from the "Golden Age" of fraternalism. The roster of members continued to grow, and these men helped establish other appendant organizations including Terre Haute Council No. 8, Royal and Select Masters, Terre Haute Commandery No. 16, Knights Templar, and Terre Haute Chapter No. 43, Order of the Eastern Star. By 1890 two more lodges (Humboldt Lodge No. 42 and Euclid Lodge No. 573) had also been chartered in the city.

Terre Haute Lodge No. 19 was instrumental in the movement to erect a single Masonic Temple for the bodies meeting in the city. Working with the other lodges and organizations in 1871, Terre Haute 19 put forward the lion's share of the funds to purchase property at the corner of 8th and Wabash. Disagreements and other issues, however, prevented the construction of a new Temple for 40 years.

In 1910, the four lodges and the three York Rite Bodies began discussions anew. They incorporated the Terre Haute Masonic Temple Association on October 11, 1911 and purchased the current property on North 8th Street. Construction began in 1915 and the completed Temple was dedicated by the Grand Lodge on July 9, 1917. Terre Haute Lodge No. 19 had the honor of holding the first meeting in the new building, and conferred the Degree of Master Mason that evening.

The first half of the 20th Century was a busy time for the Lodge. In addition to moving into a permanent home, Terre Haute Lodge No. 19 celebrated the 100th anniversary of its first meeting on July 12, 1919. Soldiers returning from service in World War I caused another marked gain in membership over the next few years. At the conferral of a Master Mason degree on March 25, 1926, No. 19 hosted the largest attended lodge meeting in its history with 389 members and visitors in attendance. With the end of World War II in 1945, the final great membership boom began. The lodges in Terre Haute were conferring the degrees on multiple candidates at a time and sometimes meeting more than once a week. At its peak in 1952, membership in Terre Haute Lodge No. 19 totaled just over 1600 Master Masons.

Masonry continued on comfortably through the next few decades, with Lodge No. 19 observing its Sesquicentennial in 1969. In recent years, however, membership has waned. The total number of names on the roll as of 2015 is just under 300, slightly less than the total at the close of the Lodge's first century.

Over the years, four members of Terre Haute Lodge No. 19 have served the Craft as Grand Master (in two jurisdictions) with many other members rising to prominence in both the Fraternity and community. Today, the Lodge's rich history serves as a solid foundation upon which new generations of members continue to build and continue the task of "Making Good Men Better."

The 2015 Officers of Terre Haute Lodge No. 19, F. & A.M.

Masonic apron worn by Lt. Col. Peter B. Allen, first Worshipful Master of Terre Haute Lodge No. 19.

1819

March 10 – 13 Masons petition Grand Lodge of Indiana for dispensation.

July 12 – First regular meeting of Terre Haute Lodge, U.D.

1821

September 13 – Charter issued to Terre Haute Lodge No. 19.

1834

November 22 – Last surviving record of a meeting until 1845.

1845

October 1 – Members of 19 petition for new dispensation.

1846

May 24 – Charter of Terre Haute Lodge No. 19 restored "as fully as if no forfeiture had taken place."

1870

October 6 – Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration of Terre Haute Lodge No. 19.

1917

July 9 – Terre Haute Lodge No. 19 holds first meeting in current Temple.

1919

July 12 – Centennial Celebration of Terre Haute Lodge No. 19's original dispensation.

1969

July 12 – Sesquicentennial Celebration of Terre Haute Lodge No. 19's original dispensation.

2005

November 18 – Euclid Lodge No. 573 merged into Terre Haute Lodge No. 19.

2016

June 11 – Dedication of Grave Marker for Peter Allen, first Worshipful Master.

NOTABLE MEMBERS

- **Peter B. Allen**, (1766-1832) – Colonel, War of 1812; early citizen and local official; First Master of a Vigo Co. Masonic Lodge.
- **Demas Deming** *(1787-1865)* – Judge; first president of the Second State Bank of Indiana (now First Financial); established the Terre Haute Brewing Company.
- **Amory Kinney** *(1792-1859)* – State Representative; Abolitionist; attorney in *Polly v. Lasselle* in Indiana Supreme Court, which resulted in all slaves held within Indiana being freed.
- **Albert Lange** *(1801-1869)* – US Consul to Amsterdam; Indiana State Auditor.
- **Richard W. Thompson** *(1809-1900)* – Lawyer and politician; Colonel, US Civil War; US Representative from Indiana; US Secretary of the Navy under Rutherford B. Hayes.
- **Charles Cruft** *(1826-1883)* – Bvt. Maj. General, US Civil War; lawyer; educator; board of managers Terre Haute School of Industrial Sciences (now Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology).
- **Benjamin G. Hudnut** *(1834-1935)* – Banker; manufacturer and miller; co-inventor, corn oil machine.
- **George E. Farrington** *(1841-1920)* – Local businessman and philanthropist; family farm became Farrington Gove; agent, Terre Haute and Indianapolis Railroad.
- **Michael Sheldon Swope** *(1843-1929)* –Jeweler and philanthropist; established the Swope Art Museum.
- **Crawford Fairbanks** *(1843-1924)* – Local businessman and philanthropist; distiller & brewer; founded Emeline Fairbanks Public Library, Fairbanks Park, and Clara Fairbanks Home for Aged Ladies.
- **Eugene V. Debs** *(1855-1926)* – (EA and FC only) U.S. Presidential candidate; American labor union leader; Nobel Peace Prize nominee; Indiana State Senator.
- **Chapman J. Root** *(1864-1945)* – Founder/owner of Root Glass Company; originator of the famous "contour" Coca-Cola bottle.
- **Arthur "Art" Neukom Nehf** *(1892-1960)* – Major League Baseball pitcher.

Terre Haute Lodge No. 19, F. & A.M.

Our meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month, beginning at 7:00 p.m., in the beautiful

Terre Haute Masonic Temple
224 N. 8th Street
Terre Haute, IN 47807
812-234-4039

TH19trestleboard@gmail.com

Visit us on the web at:
www.terrehaute19.com

Like us on Facebook

"Terre Haute Lodge No. 19"

©2016, by Terre Haute Lodge No. 19, F. & A.M.